

WASHINGTON, DC -- Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-Lakewood) welcomed today's unanimous passage of H.R. 5060, the Professional Athlete Immigration Act of 2008, in the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration. Congresswoman Sánchez, who serves on the subcommittee, authored the bill which allows professional athletes to extend their work visas.

Under current law, athletes are required to become a permanent legal resident after ten years, or leave the country. The bill would change the law, allowing foreign-born professional athletes working in the United States to petition for visa extensions every five years. Approval of the visa extensions would still be determined by the Department of Homeland Security.

“We appreciate athletes for the things they do on and off the field,” Congresswoman Linda Sánchez said. “Athletes are cultural ambassadors, role models, and philanthropists in our communities. They deserve the chance to stay and continue those contributions.”

The bill has been endorsed by Major and Minor League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League, and the relevant players associations.